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Greens worried as new safari park planned

Forest villagers also concerned over site selection in Moulvibazar

MINTU DESHWARA and DWOHA CHOWDHURY

A proposal to build the country's third safari park in Lathitila forest of Moulvibazar has raised concerns among environmentalists as the construction of roads and structures will threaten the biodiversity of the forest area. Besides, villagers who have been living and farming there for generations also question the move, fearing eviction.

However, the authorities claim environmental issues will be addressed and no one will be evicted -- while some might have to be relocated within the forest area, the safari park will open up new opportunities for them all.

Safari parks are commercial tourist attractions where animals roam freely and visitors can drive through to observe the wildlife.

The country's first safari park was established in Dulahazara of Cox's Bazar in 1999 and the second in Gazipur in 2013 -- both named after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman -- as will be this newly proposed one.

Lathitila, a 5,141-acre forest beat of Juri Forest Range under Patharia Hill Reserve, is mostly hilly with only some plain land.

The proposal to convert this forest to a safari park comes at a time when the country's hill forest areas are shrinking fast.

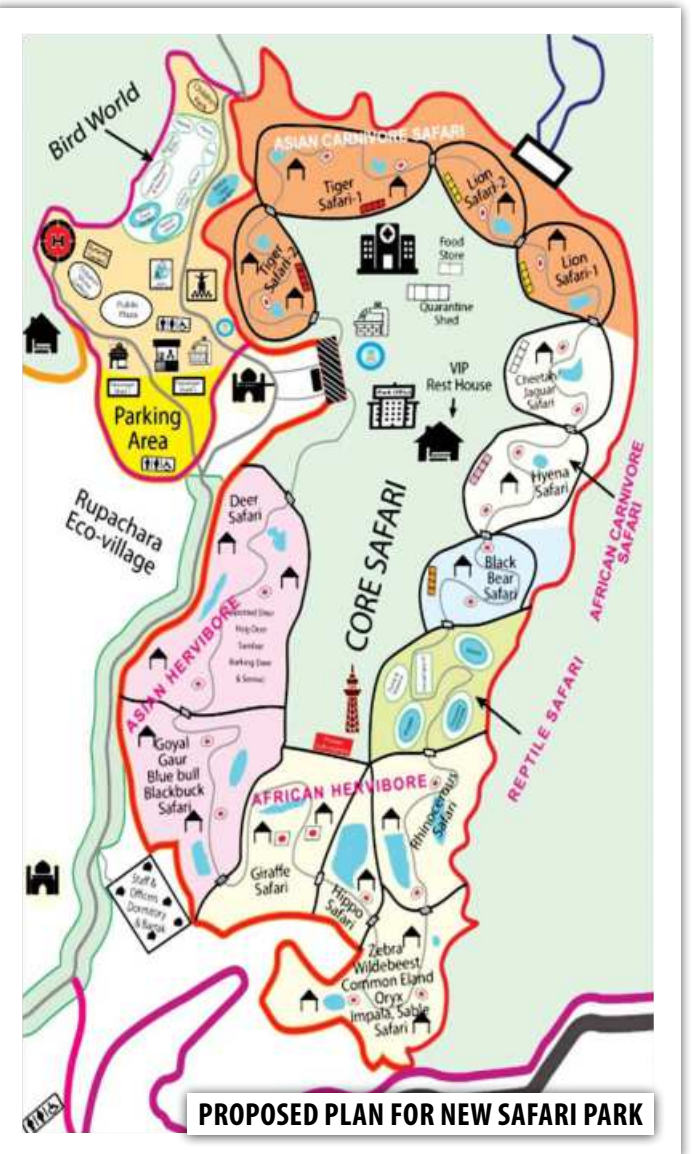
According to the Forest Sector Master Plan prepared by the Forest Department, natural hill forests occupied 128,630 hectares in 1990, which declined to 79,160 hectares in 2015.

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A man operating a surveying instrument as part of the feasibility study and master plan preparation for the country's third safari park at Lathitila forest in Moulvibazar's Juri upazila. The proposed safari park has concerned environmentalists, who think that it will threaten biodiversity in the area. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA



Italy, Spain in final four

AGENCIES

Italy set up a Euro 2020 semifinal clash against Spain after first half goals from Nicolo Barella and Lorenzo Insigne led the Azzurri to a 2-1 win over Belgium on Friday.

Italy -- who will face the Spaniards on Tuesday in London -- opened the scoring in the 31st minute when Barella picked up the ball, forced his way past defenders in the area and fired home.

Insigne doubled the lead in the 44th minute after collecting the ball on the left and skipping beyond a defender before unleashing a long-range shot that flew past Thibaut Courtois.

Romelu Lukaku clawed a goal back for Belgium from the penalty spot just before the break after Giovanni Di Lorenzo put an arm on Jeremy Doku and pushed him to the ground.

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22.50 lakh Covid vaccine jabs arrive from two sources

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has received 22.5 lakh doses of Covid-19 vaccines from two sources last night and early today.

At 11:22pm yesterday, 12.5 lakh doses of Moderna vaccine arrived at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport from the US under the Covax facility, the global vaccine alliance.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl R Miller and other senior officials received the vaccine.

An Emirates flight carrying the vaccine consignment arrived at the airport at 11:22pm, said health officials.

At 12:35am today, the country received 10 lakh doses of Sinopharm vaccine purchased from China.

The 22.5 lakh doses are part of around 45 lakh doses -- 25 lakh of Moderna and around 20 lakh of Sinopharm -- that are supposed to reach the country by today.

Bangladesh procured 1.5 crore doses of Sinopharm vaccine and is supposed to get it in three months.

The government has already resumed vaccination in all district hospitals and 40 centres across the capital with 11 lakh doses of the Sinopharm vaccine gifted by the Chinese government.

The country has so far inoculated less than three percent of its population. Its vaccination campaign, which started on February 7, stumbled due to suspension of vaccine supply by the Serum Institute of India amid a surge in cases and deaths in that country.

Bangladesh and Serum had an agreement that the latter would ship three crore shots of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine to Bangladesh in phases between January and June.

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GARMENT ITEMS Walt Disney to source those again from Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

America's Walt Disney Company is returning to Bangladesh after eight years to source high-end value-added garment items from the country as it improved working conditions and compliance in the garment sector, according to Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

"Yes, Walt Disney is coming back to Bangladesh as we have improved our working conditions, workplace safety and compliance. A senior official of the Walt Disney Company has confirmed it to me over the phone Thursday night," BGMEA President Faruque Hassan told The Daily Star yesterday.

Bangladesh saw two major industrial disasters

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ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Freedom fighters will lead our future army: Kamaruzzaman

JULY 3, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

KAMARUZZAMAN'S SPEECH AT TEKERHAT

Home Minister of the exiled Government of Bangladesh AHM Kamaruzzaman today visited the youth training camp at Tekerhat, Sunamganj. He addressed the young trainees and said, "If any of you have any doubt about the victorious outcome of this war with the modern well-equipped Pakistan army, I am telling you to always keep in mind that seven and a half crore of Bangladesh are with you in this fight."

"We must remember nobody ever makes a gift to you of your freedom; you have to earn it. If we think somebody else will win our freedom for us, we shall commit utter folly. We must continue the fight for freedom. Maybe many will come forward to help. But the fight will have to be yours and mine," he added.

Referring to the struggle of Vietnam, the home minister said, "Written in blood before our eyes today is small Vietnam. She is not insignificant anymore, commanding infinite power she has inflicted the worst crisis on American imperialism with all its modern arms and equipment. The victory of Vietnam is certain; there will be no exception for us."

He inspired the young freedom fighters with the tale of heroic struggle of the Algerians who, said Kamaruzzaman, "under extreme ... difficulty built up their strong liberation force through

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Some districts likely to be hit by flashflood

Forecasts Met office, says torrential rain to continue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some parts of the country may face flash floods while the situation in the already-flooded districts may worsen in the next three days as the ongoing torrential rain may continue.

According to Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), the highest 50-millimeter rainfall was recorded in Bogura and Tentulia each while Dhaka faced 30-metre rainfall in six hours till 3:00pm yesterday.

According to BMD, the northern, north-eastern, and south-eastern regions of the country may have rainfall in the next 72 hours.

As a result, the water of the Teesta, the Dharla, the Dudhkumar, and the Brahmaputra may rise rapidly. Other major rivers of the upper Meghna basin and south-eastern hill basin may also rise, BMD said.

Contacted, Bazlur Rashid, a petrologist of BMD, said the country faces the highest rainfall in July every year.

The monsoon here is now active, he added.

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HUMAN TRAFFICKING Bangladesh still in tier 2 in US report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh retained its position on "Tier 2" in the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report for the second year, showing signs of progress after being on the "Tier 2 Watch List" for the three previous years.

"The [Bangladesh] government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period, considering the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity; therefore Bangladesh remained on Tier 2," said the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report released yesterday.

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A man pulls his rickshaw through knee-deep rainwater on the waterlogged Haji Osmani Goni Road in the capital's Alubazar. A combination of heavy rain and poor drainage has caused similar hardships to Dhaka residents. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

India's Covid death toll tops 400,000

Vaccination drive falters in Asia; J&J's says its vaccine effectively combats Delta variant

AGENCIES

India became the third country to pass 400,000 Covid-19 deaths, official data showed yesterday, as the highly contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus surged through Asia this week, prompting some countries to tighten curbs and others to hasten vaccination.

India said its total deaths are now 400,312 -- behind only the United States and Brazil -- with total cases almost 30.5 million.

Many experts suspect India's true death toll is more than a million, after a devastating spike in cases in April and May that overwhelmed hospitals.

The surge was blamed on the Delta variant and government complacency after Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared victory over the virus in January.

Daily case numbers have since decreased significantly and many restrictions on activity have been lifted, raising fears of a new spike in coming months.

The government aims to vaccinate all of the country's 1.1 billion adults this year. But because of shortages, administrative confusion and hesitancy, only around five percent have had two doses so far.

On June 21 the government tried to jumpstart the drive by making vaccines free for all adults, leading to a surge in demand with more than nine million shots being given in a day.

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PRAYER TIMING JULY 3

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-10 12-30 5-00 6-55 8-17
JAMAT 4-45 1-15 5-15 7-00 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION